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Work

Life

The Four Agreements

NAVIGATOR

A Code of Conduct Based on Personal Freedom.

Everything around you is a dream. Your life is a dream, only you find yourself awake. There are many dreams. The dreams of the individuals come together to form the dreams of the community, which come together to form the dreams of the Nation and the dreams of the planet. The dreams include all of the knowledge about how to live in society, laws, language, social customs and so forth. Children are taught the dreams of the society by their parents and teachers. I call this the domestication of humans.

Children don't have a choice in what they believe; they agree with whatever they are told by adults. These agreements become beliefs. As children we are domesticated in the same way as a pet. When you are good you receive praise and when you are bad you are punished. We learn to try to please others so they like and reward us.

After many years, we don't need our parents to keep domesticating us; we can do it for ourselves and also learn to domesticate others. Our beliefs become so strong that I call them the "Book of Law," because whatever is in the Book of Law we take to be the absolute truth. Whenever we go against the Book of Law, we feel fear because we are breaking our own rules.

We all have a Judge who resides in our minds and determines whether we are following the Book of Law and passes judgment on

us (and everything around us). We have a Victim who receives all the guilt and blame we manufacture for ourselves.

The problem with humans is that whenever we make a mistake we pay for it many thousands of times. We are the only animal to do this. Most animals pay for their mistake only once, while we keep reliving ours in our minds over and over again. We also make others, such as our spouse, kids, and parents, pay for their mistakes continually as well.

While the dream of the planet varies from country to country, for the most part it consists of fear and suffering. We don't see beauty any longer because our minds are so fogged up with false beliefs.

We have agreements that make us suffer, but we also have the power to create new dreams. Every time we break an old agreement that no longer serves us, we become stronger.

There are four agreements.

The first agreement:
BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD.

Your word is the most powerful thing you have. Hitler used the word to convince people to commit atrocious acts. The human mind is like a fertile garden; whatever seeds you plant in it will grow. If you plant seeds of fear and destruction, that is what will grow. If you plant seeds of beauty and harmony, they will come into your life.

During our domestication, when we were children, the word was very strong. If someone said to you that you were ugly, then you would think that you were ugly.

The original translation of the word "impeccable" is "without sin." When you sin, you do something that goes against yourself or against what you believe in. When you do this, you are rejecting yourself. Therefore, being impeccable with your word means not using your word to go against yourself.

If I call you names, I am using my word against myself because you will hate me for having called you names. Spreading poison in the form of hate, blame, and jealousy is one way in which we misuse our word and create our own living hell.

Many times we unintentionally spread poison to our children. We might tell them that they have an ugly voice to keep them quiet while we work, but they grow up believing that they can't sing.

Gossiping is another way we spread poison. Because gossiping is so ingrained in our society, it's very much like spreading an infectious virus. Everyone who comes into contact with the gossip becomes infected with it and damaged by it.

Agreement two:
DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY.

Don't take anything personally. Whatever anyone says about you, it's not about you—it's

about them. When you take something personally, it means that you are agreeing with what they are saying. If someone calls you stupid, then the minute you start to take it personally (agree with them), then their poison starts to get to you.

People tend to take things personally because they believe that they are the most important thing around. They are filled with their own sense of self-importance. Everything is about them.

What someone else says about you has more to do with what is in his or her own mind and his or her own beliefs than it has about you. We therefore have to make certain that we don't swallow other people's poison or garbage.

What you think about me is not important. If you think I am great or if you tell me that I am rotten, I won't take it personally. I know who I am better than you do. By telling me these things, you are reflecting yourself, not me. If you tell me that I make you mad, or I am hurting you even, then it is more about you than it is about me. Maybe something I have said has touched a raw spot in you—but you are dealing with yourself, not with me.

Even what you think about yourself should not be taken personally. It may not be true. Your mind has many different voices. Some parts of the mind listen while the others speak. Sometimes there are thousands of parts of your mind speaking and listening at the same time, each with its own unique personality. Maybe the agreements you have made are not compatible with all parts of the mind, so a big war breaks out.

No matter what someone else does, don't take it personally, even if he lies, cheats, or steals from you. The only reason he would do these things is because he is afraid. Once you learn how to master this agreement, you will see that you can live in paradise while being confined to the middle of hell.

Agreement 3:
DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS.

In life, we make a lot of assumptions, and worse, we believe them. Making assumptions can cause a lot of problems, especially when we act on them. We might, for example, make some assumptions about what others think about us and react badly or in a negative way towards them.

We make assumptions because we need explanations (to our questions) so we can order the chaos of our minds. But rather than finding out the reality of the situation, we try to avoid looking ignorant by making up our own answers. Answers make us feel secure whether they are right or not, and we believe them because we like to believe that what we think is true.

How many times do we make assumptions about what our partners are thinking? We think that we don't need to say what we want or mean, because we assume that our partner can read our mind.

The main assumptions we make are that people relate to the world in the same way that we do. We make assumptions about our own abilities: "I can't do it; it won't turn out." And we also make assumptions that we can change our partners into different people.

Whenever we make these and other assumptions, we are just setting ourselves up for conflict. When you stop making assumptions, everything changes; your communications and relationships all improve for the better.

The best way to stop making assumptions is to ask a lot of questions and to ask directly for what you want.

The fourth agreement:
ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST.

You should always do your best, no matter what. Sometimes your best will be better than at other times. Sometimes you'll feel more capable and able, and other times you will feel less so, but no matter what, you should still do your best—not better and not less.

If you try to do more than your best, you will end up wasting a lot of energy. If you do less, your quality of life will decline. When you do your best all the time, you'll gradually grow.

There was once a man who wanted to attain enlightenment. He asked the master how long it would be to enlightenment if he meditated 4 hours a day. The master said that it would take 10 years. He then asked the master how long it would take to obtain enlightenment if he meditated 8 hours a day. The master said it might take 20 years. When the man inquired as to why it would take longer to obtain enlightenment if he meditated more, the master replied, "You are not here to sacrifice your life. If you can do your best in 2 hours and you spend 8 hours meditating, you will grow tired and miss the point."

When you do your best, you do things because you want to do them and not because you have to. If you only work because you want a paycheck, then everything becomes more difficult. Work becomes frustrating and a struggle. If you do something because you want to, rather than expecting a return at the end, then you will enjoy what you are doing and will get more out of life.

If you are enjoying what you are doing, then it doesn't feel like work to do your best. Whereas if you are doing something only because you have to, then it is very difficult to do your best at it.

The other three agreements will only work if you do your best at them. The more you do your best, the better you become. Sometimes you might break your word or take something personally, but don't judge yourself, just agree to keep doing your best. (Source: Don Miguel Ruiz)

"People travel to wonder at the height of the mountains, at the huge waves of the seas, at the long course of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars, and yet they pass by themselves without wondering."
—Saint Augustine

INSPIRATION

A Warrior's Song

The sun kisses a mountain top
And glistens on its face of snow,
And slowly climbs into the sky above
And lights the valley below.
For each of us that this day awakes
A miracle takes place.
For once again we walk our Earth
And own all upon its face.
And the past regrets and foolish fears
Of yesterday's cloudy mind,
Are washed away by the light of day
And seem so far behind.
For each of us is reborn each day,
Our life renews again.
And with the help of God we will find a cause
That makes us want to win.
For a man without a goal in life
Is a man already dead.
His mind wanders from place to place,
And he walks with feet of lead.
He has no reason to stretch his mind,
No spirit to stir his soul.
His name is not even in the book,
When destiny calls the roll.
Better to take the wine of life
And drink both deep and long—
Greet each day 'cause you're here to stay,
And sing your warrior's song.
For the battle of life is joined, and
You might fight long and true.
For in this strife, it's the game of your life
And the only loser is you.
Gird up your loins with courage
And answer the trumpet's call,
And lose or win, you can say at the end,
This was the greatest of all!
—William E Bailey

"Act the way you'd like to be and soon you'll be the way you act."
—George W. Crane

HUMOR

Excerpts From “Answers to a Sixth-Grade History Test”

1. Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada.

2. The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a female moth.

3. The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespeare. He was born in the year 1564, supposedly on his birthday. He never made much money and is famous only because of his plays. He wrote tragedies, comedies, and hysterectomies, all in Islamic pentameter. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couple. Romeo's last wish was to be laid by Juliet.

4. Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cab in which he built with his own hands. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. They believe the assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

5. The nineteenth century was a time of a great many thoughts and inventions. People stopped reproducing by hand and started reproducing by machine. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of a hundred men. Louis Pasteur discovered a cure for rabbits. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote the *Organ of the Species*. Madman Curie discovered the radio. And Karl Marx became one of the Marx Brothers.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The Rose

Lifestyle is style over amount. And style is an art—the art of living. You can't buy style with money. You can't buy good taste with money. You can only buy more with money. Lifestyle is culture—the appreciation of good music, dance, art, sculpture, literature, plays—and the art of living well. It's a taste for the fine, the unique, the beautiful.

Lifestyle also means rewarding excellence wherever you find it by not taking the small things of life for granted. Let me illustrate this with a personal anecdote:

Many years ago my lady friend and I were on a trip to Carmel, California for some shopping and exploring. On the way we stopped at a service station. As soon as we parked our car in front of the pumps, a young man, about eighteen or nineteen, came bouncing out to the car and with a big smile said, “Can I help you?”

“Yes,” I answered. “A full tank of gas, please.” I wasn't prepared for what followed. In this day and age of self-service and deteriorating customer treatment, this young man checked every tire, washed every window—even the sunroof—singing and whistling the whole time. We couldn't believe both the quality of service and his upbeat attitude about his work.

When he brought the bill I said to the young man, “Hey, you really have taken good care of us. I appreciate it.”

He replied, “I really enjoy working. It's fun for me and I get to meet nice people like you.”

This kid was really something!

I said, “We're on our way to Carmel and we want to get some milkshakes. Can you tell us where we can find the nearest Baskin-Robbins?”

“Baskin-Robbins is just a few blocks away,” he said as he gave us exact directions. Then he added, “Don't park out front—park around to the side so your car won't get sideswiped.”

What a kid!

As we got to the ice cream store we ordered milkshakes, except that instead of two, we ordered three. Then we drove back to the station. Our young friend dashed out to greet us. “Hey, I see you got your milkshakes.”

“Yes, and this one is for you!”

His mouth fell open. “For me?”

“Sure. With all the fantastic service you gave us, I couldn't leave you out of the milkshake deal.”

“Wow!” was his astonished reply.

As we drove off I could see him in my rear-view mirror just standing there, grinning from ear to ear.

Now, what did this little act of generosity cost me? Only about two dollars—you see, it's not the money, it's the style.

Well, I must have been feeling especially creative that day, so on our arrival in Carmel I drove directly to a flower shop. As we walked inside I said to the florist, “I need a long-stemmed rose for my lady to carry while we go shopping in Carmel.”

The florist, a rather unromantic type, replied, “We sell them by the dozen.”

“I don't need a dozen,” I said, “just one.”

“Well,” he replied haughtily, “it will cost you two dollars.”

“Wonderful,” I exclaimed. “There's nothing worse than a cheap rose.”

Selecting the rose with some deliberation, I handed it to my friend. She was so impressed! And the cost? Two dollars. Just two dollars. A bit later she looked up and said, “Jim, I must be the only woman in Carmel today carrying a rose.” And I believe she probably was.

Can you imagine the opportunity to create magic with those around you, and all for the cost of a few dollars, some imagination and care.

Remember, it is not the amount that matters but the thought and care that often has the greatest impact upon those you love. (Source: Reproduced with permission from the Jim Rohn Weekly E-zine, <http://www.jimrohn.com>)

“A man would do nothing, if he waited until he could do it so well that no one at all would find fault with what he has done.”
—Cardinal Newman, 1801–1890,
British Preacher

WEB SITE PICK

<http://www.petswelcome.com/>

If you're a pet owner who's tired of seeing all those “no pets” signs at apartment buildings, beaches, hotels, and other places, this site is for you. Petswelcome.com is primarily a searchable database of pet-friendly establishments, but for those situations when you just can't bring your pet along, the site also features listings for kennels and pet-sitters.

“When we are motivated by goals that have deep meaning, by dreams that need completion, by pure love that needs expressing, then we truly live.”
—Greg Anderson (The 22 Non-Negotiable Laws of Wellness)

HEALTH AND FITNESS

The Benefits of Exercise

Many experts believe that regular exercise is the single most important thing anyone can do to improve overall health and well-being. New studies show that aerobic activity increases levels of brain chemicals that encourage the growth of nerve cells, which may be the reason moderately strenuous exercise is associated with enhanced memory skills.

Some ways that exercise can help retain mental capacity include the following:

- Reducing anxiety and stress

- Improving mood and possibly alleviating depression
- Improving sleep
- Increasing energy levels
- Slowing the rate of bone loss
- Enabling the body to use insulin more efficiently
- Improving cardiovascular health
- Controlling weight and preventing obesity

The National Institute on Aging suggests incorporating four types of exercises into your life. Endurance exercise, such as walking, helps increase stamina. Strength exercise, with free weights or resistance weights, increases metabolism and may help prevent osteoporosis. Flexibility exercise, such as stretching or yoga, prevents and aids recovery from injuries. And balance exercises, such as standing on one foot, help prevent falls.

By following these basic tips, as well as any advice from your physician related to any specific health conditions, it is possible to live well in old age as opposed to just living into old age.

FINANCES

Money From Home

If you're refinancing your mortgage, you may pocket some cash, too, with so-called "cash-out" refinancing. Say you bought a house a few years ago with an 8-percent, \$200,000 mortgage. Now your balance has been paid down to \$180,000 and mortgage rates have fallen to 7 percent.

If your house is now appraised at \$300,000 and you have a \$180,000 mortgage balance, you have \$120,000 worth of home equity. A lender might be willing to lend you \$240,000 instead of \$180,000. Now you can pay off the old \$180,000 loan and have \$60,000 in extra cash. You'll be paying off a larger loan, but lower interest rates will help hold down your costs.

How will the interest you pay on such a loan be taxed?

Interest on the first \$180,000, the balance of your old loan, is treated as "acquisition debt." As long as it's secured by a residence, the interest on that amount will be deductible.

If you use the extra \$60,000 for nonhousing purposes, that's treated as "home equity debt." The interest on up to \$100,000 worth of home equity debt is deductible. In this example, all of your interest payments will be deductible.

"I am not in this world to live up to other people's expectations, nor do I feel that the world must live up to mine."
—Fritz Perls

WORTH KNOWING

Discover Hidden Profits in "Spare Change"

Fact: Take the spare change out of your pocket every night and put it in a child's piggy bank. At the end of a year you will have at least a hundred dollars to spend as you wish.

Now take this same principle and discover the huge payoff in the "spare change" time you've been wasting all these years.

How often do you sit in front of your computer and wait?

Everyone waits for the computer to reboot, restart, unlock, "scandisk," "defrag," finish printing, download a file from the Internet, or generally accomplish tasks that have you sitting twiddling your thumbs for at least 60 to 90 seconds or more.

The shocking truth is that those one-, two- and three-minute nuggets of time contain the seeds for accomplishing all the tasks you never seem to have enough minutes in the day to finish.

Computers represent a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they are supposed to save us time by efficiently helping us with big tasks such as balancing our checkbooks, running our businesses, and doing our taxes.

In reality, it seems the time computers save you gets sucked right back up in time-consuming tasks such as installing software, scanning for viruses, and waiting for the computer to restart!

Think about the spare-change-in-the-piggy-bank example. Now use that same principle to your advantage by developing an awareness of how you spend your "pocket change" time in front of the computer every day.

Small bits of wasted time add up quickly over the course of a day, week, year—all of it in 2- to 3-minute increments. Fifteen wasted minutes a day equals well over 1.5 productive weeks wasted per year!

Take this "one-day challenge."

Today, try these alternatives to sitting and watching the "hourglass" on your monitor while waiting for your computer to finish a task!

- Organize your desk
- Sharpen your pencils
- Make a quick phone call
- Check your "to-do" list; if you don't have a "to-do" list, make one
- Write a fast note to a friend
- Put in a load of laundry
- Go to the bathroom
- Get another cup of coffee
- Pay a bill

- Catch up your checkbook entries
- Pick up your office
- Brainstorm an idea
- Stand up and stretch
- Daydream about a happy thought for 90 seconds

Carefully watch how much time you spend in front of the computer waiting for it to do something and then see how many things you can accomplish with that time.

Nothing could reward you more than developing a consciousness about how you spend those spare moments that add up to enough time to write a book, take a trip with your family, or take positive actions that will change your life forever.

Use your "spare change" time to accomplish the things you claim you never find time to finish! (Source: Jim Edwards, syndicated newspaper columnist, (<http://www.TheNetReporter.com>) and author of several best-selling ebooks. "Are YOU a "Lazy Achiever"? "The Lazy Man's Guide to Online Business" "How to Work Less, get Paid More and have Tons more Fun!" <http://www.getmoredonefaster.com>)

TECH TIP

If you have Word's AutoFormat option for Automatic Bulleted Lists turned on, you probably already know that you can quickly start a bulleted list without reaching for the toolbars. Just type * and a space and the first item for your list. When you press the Enter key, Word changes the asterisk to a bullet. Here are some other keys you can use to automatically start a bulleted list with something other than the standard bullet.

Instead of an asterisk:

- Type - to get a dash
 - Type -- to get a square block
 - Type > to get an arrow
 - Type -> to get a longer arrow
 - Type => to get a thicker arrow
- (Source: [MyFree.com](http://www.MyFree.com) Internet Guru Tips)

"He who controls others may be powerful, but he who has mastered himself is mightier still."
—Lao Tsu, B.C. 600-?, Chinese Philosopher

Questions/Comments to:

Evelin Saxinger, Work/Life Program Manager,
esaxinge@hq.nasa.gov or 358-1311

An online version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/cc/navig-6.pdf>